AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The claims in this listing replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1 - 17. (Canceled)

18. (Currently Amended) A method for marking a material, wherein said material is an alcoholic beverage or a perfume, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

[[a)]] identifying at least one ion selected from ~~the~~ ions contained in standard seawater in said material present at [[a]] an initial concentration level of below 50 ppm, said at least one ion being non-toxic with respect to human or animal use ~~in the unmarked state~~; and

~~b) selecting a marking composition comprising said at least one ion as identified in step a); and~~

[[c)]] incorporating a marking composition comprising said at least one ion that is non-toxic with respect to human or animal use ~~said marking composition of step b)~~ into the ~~unmarked~~ material to form a marked material including~~; wherein the concentration level of the~~ said at least one ion in the marked material [[is]] at an increased concentration ~~in step c)~~ by at least ~~the~~ a factor of 3 as compared to the initial concentration level ~~of the ion present in the unmarked material~~.

19 - 20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 18, wherein the concentration level of ~~the~~ said at least one ion in the marked material is increased ~~in step c)~~ by at least a factor of 5, as compared to the initial concentration level of the at least one ion ~~present in the unmarked material~~.

22. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 18, wherein the concentration level of ~~the~~ said at least one ion in the marked material is increased ~~in step c)~~ by at least a factor of 8, as compared to the initial concentration level of the at least one ion ~~present in the unmarked material~~.

23. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 18, wherein said marking composition comprises at least one salt of ~~the group comprising~~ inorganic salts and organic salts.

24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 18, wherein said at least one ion is [an] at least one inorganic anion.

26. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 18, wherein said at least one ion is [[an]] is at least one anion selected from ~~the group consisting of~~ fluoride, chloride, bromide, iodide, borate, carbonate, nitrate, phosphate, sulfate, ~~and~~ or selenate.

27. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 18, wherein said at least one ion is [[an]] at least one inorganic cation.

28. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for marking a material~~ according to claim 18, wherein said at least one ion is [[an]] at least one cation selected from ~~the group consisting of~~ ammonium(+), lithium(+), sodium(+), potassium(+), rubidium(+), cesium(+), magnesium(2+),

calcium(2+), strontium(2+), barium(2+), iron (2+/3+), cobalt(2+), nickel(2+), copper(2+), and zinc(2+).

29. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 18, wherein~~, prior to step a),~~ the identifying comprises determining the initial concentration level of said at least one ion ~~in the unmarked material is determined~~.

30. (Currently Amended) A method for marking and identifying the authenticity of material, wherein said material is an alcoholic beverage or a perfume, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

a) marking a material according to the method of claim 18 to obtain the marked material including an altered concentration level of said at least one ion, the altered concentration level of said at least one ion being defined as [[a]] at least one reference value;

b) measuring in said marked material [[the]] at least one individual concentration of the said at least one ion by means of a sensor; and

c) comparing said measured ~~value~~ at least one individual concentration with ~~at least one~~ the at least one reference value and indicating the result of the comparison.

31. (Canceled)

32. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 30, wherein, prior to ~~step~~ a), the concentration level of the at least one ion in the unmarked material is determined.

33. (Canceled)

34. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 30, wherein said measuring ~~step~~ includes determining the at least one individual concentration with an electrochemical sensor ~~is performed as~~ in a field audit analysis.

35. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[30]] 34, wherein said method further comprises ~~the step of~~ an off-the-field laboratory analysis for confirmation of [[a]] the field audit analysis.

36. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 35, wherein said off-the-field laboratory analysis is performed by analytical methods selected from ~~the group consisting of~~ atomic absorption spectroscopy (AAS), ion chromatography (IC), mass spectrometry (MS), or combinations thereof.

37. (Currently Amended) A method of identifying the authenticity of a material, the material having been marked according to claim 18, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

a) providing at least one reference ~~values~~ concentration of said at least one ion comprised in said ~~marking composition which has been added to said~~ marked material;

b) measuring by ~~means of~~ a sensor [[an]] at least one individual concentration of said at least one ion in said marked material ~~to be identified~~, the sensor being capable of measuring individual concentration values of said ~~ionic compound~~ at least one ion; and

c) comparing said measured ~~value~~ at least one individual concentration with said at least one reference ~~value~~ concentration and indicating the result of the comparison.

38. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 37, wherein said sensor is an electrochemical sensor.

39. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 37, wherein said sensor is an ion-selective electrode.

40. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[37]] 39, wherein said ~~ion selective~~ ion-selective electrode is a multi-ion-selective electrode.

41. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 37, wherein said sensor is a ion-selective field effect transistor.

42. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 37, wherein said measuring ~~step~~ includes determining the at least one individual concentration with an electrochemical sensor ~~is performed as~~ in a field audit analysis.

43. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim [[37]] 42, wherein said method further comprises ~~the step of~~ an off-the-field laboratory analysis for confirmation of [[a]] the field audit analysis.

44. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 43, wherein said off-the-field laboratory analysis is performed by analytical methods selected from ~~the group consisting of~~ atomic absorption spectroscopy (AAS), ion chromatography (IC), mass spectrometry (MS), or combinations thereof.

45. (Currently Amended) A marked material selected from the group consisting of alcoholic beverages and perfumes, obtained according to a method according to claim 18~~, wherein the concentration of the ions incorporated in the marked material, the said ions being comprised in said marking composition, is non-toxic with respect to human or animal use~~.

46. (Canceled)